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Traces Of English Sources In Schiller's Poetry

TRACES OF ENGLISH SOURCES IN SCHILLER'S POETRY

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The literature of a nation or the work of an individual must be studied in its relation to the age which produces it and to the forces which are influential in determining its character. In the consideration of the German literature of the eighteenth century one must note the importance of foreign influence. "No nation was ever more in debt than was Germany to France and England for nearly three-quarters of the eighteenth century; none repaid a debt more generously than Germany hers in the last quarter of that century."[1]

One who has done much to repay this debt and who is typical of the tendency of the period is Friedrich Schiller. He received much from the literature of other nations, but he has more than cancelled this debt through the wonderful legacy he has left to thinkers of all nations. Before considering the traces of English influence in his works, it is well to discuss briefly the relation of the English literature to the German throughout the eighteenth century.

At the close of the seventeenth century Germany held a most insignificant place in the literary world. The beginnings of a national literature resulting from the influence of the Reformation and Renaissance had been destroyed by the calamitous effects of the Thirty Years' War. In the work of the building up and regeneration of the literature England played an important part.

Early in the eighteenth century the works of the English

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1. Robertson's History of German Literature, p. 238.

philosophers were translated into German and were a significant factor in the development of the philosophers who exerted such a tremendous influence upon German thought throughout the century. Locke, Shaftesbury, Hume, Hutchison, and others, had as wide a circle of readers in Germany as in England.[1] Kant acknowledges his indebtedness to one of the English philosophers. "Hume", he says, "brach meinen dogmatischen Schlummer. Er hat einen Funken, wenn auch nicht ein Licht angezündet."[2] The entire "Aufklärungszeit" shows the influence of the freethinkers.

An important medium through which English influence and inspiration was widely diffused in Germany were the weekly journals modelled after the Spectator, Tatler, and Guardian. These "moralische Wochenschriften" attained an enormous popularity, more than five hundred being published before the close of the century.[3] The earliest of these periodicals, often consisting mainly of translations from the English, strove to raise the moral and social standards. This moral tone was gradually discontinued and the weeklies assumed a more strictly literary character. The strict prohibition of the discussion of matters of state was also responsible for their development into the critical journal. The literary value of the weeklies lies in their demand for a prose characterized by brevity, elegance, and humor. Their contribution to the development of the "Volk-litteratur" is also of much importance.

The translation of Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" in 1720 was the occasion for a veritable Robinson-fever and was the model for

1. Cf. Koch's Beziehungen der Englischen Literatur zur Deutschen im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. Robertson's History of German Literature, p. 244.

countless "Robinsonaden" which appeared during the century. The universal character of the novel is responsible for its unversal acceptance. It is not merely the story of Robinson, but it is the story of the development of humanity from its first crude beginnings. Hettner very aptly calls it "das Spiegelbild der ganzen Menschheit".[1] Many of the German "Robinsonaden" were inferior to their English model, degenerating for the most part to pure adventure stories. The great value of the English romance was that it turned the channel of the Volk-romance from the Spanish adventure stories to the novels and romances of England. They prepared the way for a hearty reception of Swift and later of Richardson and Fielding.

The English influence in German literature was not limited to prose works alone. The first poets to win recognition and popularity were those who looked to France for their models; the most influential of these writers was Pope, who had brought didactic poetry to its highest development in England. It was this didactic, moralizing tendency - the thought-content of the English poetry, which caught the attention of German writers. The beneficial influence of the English didactic poetry is shown in the superiority of the poetry of Brockes and Haller over that of the second Silesian school. In the work of the younger writers, emphasis is placed upon the content as well as upon the artistic form of the poem.

Brockes' work, "Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott", whose moralizing, deistical tendency points to Pope as a model, shows also the influence which Thomson's "Seasons" exerted over the descrip-

1. Kippenberg's Robinson in Deutschland, p. 13.

tive poetry of this period.[1] Brockes and Kleist, two of Thomson's most distinguished disciples, were pioneers in the field of Nature-poetry. Their work introduced the tendency which culminated in the return to Nature of which Rousseau was such an ardent advocate. Though the influence of Thomson's "Seasons" was very prominent about the middle of the century, it had practically disappeared toward the close. But it is interesting to note that a passage from Brockes' translation of the "Seasons" was chosen as the subject for Haydn's second Oratorio after he had already taken his text for the "Creation" from Paradise Lost.[2]

Two other poets, prominent toward the middle of the century and of great inspiration to German writers, were Milton and Young. Milton's "Paradise Lost" had been translated in the seventeenth century but received little attention from German readers until after Bodmer's translation appeared in 1732. Milton's contribution to German literature is three-fold. He was influential in preparing the way for Shakespeare and he helped to awaken an interest in antiquity.[3] Lastly, the study of Milton was influential in causing the Germans to turn from the works of the Romance languages to a closer union with the English, which they began to regard as a related language.

Young's "Night Thoughts" were received with great enthusiasm in Germany, and at the close of the fifth decade there was a whole "chorus of Night Thoughts". Kind explains that this work was given such a hearty welcome because it "struck a responsive

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1. Koch's Beziehungen der Englischen Literatur zur Deutschen im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert, p. 13.
2. Ibid. p. 17.
3. Ibid. p. 28.

chord in the tendency of the period to express its efforts, longings, and desires in pensive poetry."[1] Klopstock and Cramer, who are very extravagant in their praise of Young, looked to him as a model as they set themselves against the tendencies of the Anacreontic poetry and as they strove to deepen the religious and moral tone of the poetry. An important and influential work of Young's in addition to the "Night Thoughts" was his "Conjectures on Original Composition". Through Hamann and Herder the principles laid down by Young were disseminated and virtually formed a large part of the creed of the "Storm and Stress" writers a few years later.

The moral element so conspicuous in the early "moralische Wochenschriften" was again prominent in Richardson's novels. Although the defects in these novels are most apparent yet Richardson's influence was important especially in the fifth decade of the century. His novels, which are the forerunners of the "Bürgerliche Trauerspiel" so popular toward the close of the century, also foreshadow "Werther" and "Nouvelle Heloise". The characters are commonplace men and women and the interest lies in the appeal of common joys and sorrows. Musäus was instrumental in bringing into disfavor the extreme sentimentality of the Richardson imitations through his quixotic novel "Grandison der Zweite". The influence of Fielding and Sterne also tended to counterbalance that of Richardson.

The popularity of English literature in Germany and the numerous translations and imitations of English works prepared the way for the author who was to exert the most powerful and per-

1. Kind's Edward Young in Germany, p. 60.

manent influence upon German literature. Translations of Shakespeare had appeared in the preceding century and his works were not unknown in the earlier part of the eighteenth century. But the greatest interest in the "bard of Avon" appeared in the sixth decade. Lessing was instrumental in turning the tide of German favor from the French dramatists to Shakespeare. He pointed out that Shakespeare, notwithstanding apparently fundamental dissimilarities, followed the rules of Aristotle better than the French dramatists who were professedly the disciples of Aristotle.[1] In Lessing's work we have an intimation of one of the greatest contributions which Shakespeare made to German literature. It was the study and appreciation of Shakespeare which led to a truer understanding of the ancient writers.

In the first years of the Shakespeare enthusiasm, though almost fanatically admired, he was seldom understood. The favorite of the Storm and Stress writers, he was glorified as a genius who did not follow conventional rules yet created the most wonderful works of art. This first blind enthusiasm led to a sincere study and true appreciation of his work. He inspired in his German admirers a realization of the possibilities of the creation of a great German literature.

Two works also introduced in the sixth decade of the century, but of much less consequence, were Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" and Macpherson's "Ossian". Bürger received the inspiration for his collection of "Volkslieder" from the Eng-

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1. Koch's Beziehungen der Englischen Litteratur zur Deutschen im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert, p. 33.

lish model. And it is to the Ossianic movement which was so prominent in Germany that we owe much of the newly awakened interest in the Germanic past and in German popular poetry.

We have traced the general outline of the English influence upon the German literature in the eighteenth century. We shall discuss briefly the relation of English literature to Schiller's work as a whole. Attempts have been made to show the direct influence of Pope, Young, and other English authors in Schiller's works. They undoubtedly influenced his work, but this was for the most part an indirect rather than a direct influence. The didactic tendency of his poetry represents the highest development of this type of poetry which was introduced by English writers. His descriptions of Nature were doubtless influenced by the wave of Nature-poetry which originated in England. His ballads, through their relation to Bürger's work, may also bear the traces of English influence. Such general resemblances could be traced further, but it would be useless. There was no German writer of the eighteenth century but felt the beneficial effects of the relations which existed between English and German literature at this time. And Schiller received much that was inspirational and of permanent value from the English.

Schiller was deeply interested in the English philosophers. Shaftesbury, Ferguson, Locke, and Burke were influential in modifying the ideas of the young philosopher.[1] His early dramas likewise show some traces of Ossian's influence though his inter-

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1. Introduction to "Philosophische Schriften", Schiller's Sämtliche Werke, Vol. XI.

est in Ossian was not permanent. He was, however, deeply indebted to Shakespeare, whom he learned to know through the lectures of Professor Abel. He began at once to study the English dramatist, finding him cold at first, but as his appreciation of his work increased, his admiration rose to a true veneration for Shakespeare. Though English influence can be traced in his philosophical and dramatic works we will limit ourselves to pointing out English sources in his poetry.

Before turning to a study of his poetry it will be interesting to note briefly Schiller's personal attitude toward political England as it shows itself in two of his poems. In the first of these poems, "Die Unüberwindliche Flotte", which appeared in 1786, Schiller exalts England in an enthusiastic manner common to many German writers at this time. After describing the extraordinary strength of the Spanish fleet and bewailing the impending defeat of England he eulogizes English freedom. To Schiller, at this time, England appears as the "Glücksel'ge Insel - Herrscherin der Meere, Grossherzige Brittania" - the home of a freeborn people. His praise of her is extravagant and he calls other nations to witness that England has attained her enviable condition through her own efforts. All free men everywhere join in sorrow over the apparently certain disaster. The Almighty, seeing the disaster which threatens his Albion, causes the calamity to be averted. The defeat of England would mean the destruction of the only check upon oppression - the destruction of "der Freiheit Paradies".

How changed is Schiller's attitude toward England in 1801 as expressed in his poem, "An den neuen Jahrhundert." The poem

opens with the expression of the desire to find a place of refuge for freedom. England is no longer the home of freedom, but rather in her wars for possessions she is threatening the freedom of all nations; her insatiable ambition stops only at Paradise. It is a lamentable fact that one must look in vain for a dwelling place of Freedom.

"Freiheit ist nur in dem Reich der Träume,
Und das Schöne blüht nur im Gesang."

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CHAPTER I

TRACES OF OSSIANIC INFLUENCE IN SCHILLER'S EARLY POEMS

The influence of English literature, which was so prominent in the German literature of the eighteenth century, is relatively hard to trace in the works of the master-minds of this period. The mission of the foreign literature was accomplished - the German writers had found themselves, and in the work of Goethe and Schiller we find the culmination of a century-long development. It is but natural, however, that their work should show traces of this foreign influence.

In discussing the traces of English sources in Schiller's poetry we shall first consider an influence which, though transitory, has left its impression upon his early work. The youthful Schiller was attracted by the Ossianic songs, and in his early poems pays tribute to the influence of the Celtic bard.[1]

In these poems we are often reminded of images or expressions to be found in the translations of the "Songs of Selma" which appear in Goethe's Werther. The following lines from "Der Abend" (1776) recall a similar thought in Colma's song.[2]

"Hör' auf, du Wind, durchs Laub zu sausen,
Hör' auf, du Strom, durchs Feld zu brausen,
Und horcht und betet an mit mir".

Colma also implores Nature to be silent that her call for her lover

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1. Minor's Life of Schiller, p. 136.
2. Boxberger, "Schiller's Werke", Gedichte, Zweites Buch, p. 48.

may be heard:

"Schweig eine Weile, O Wind! still eine kleine Weile,
O Strom!"

The similarity in this case is but slight, and may be purely accidental. There are, however, very definite traces of one of Selma's Songs in the "Elegie auf dem Tod eines Jünglings".[1] Alpin, the singer, is lamenting the death of the young warrior Morar who has fallen in the prime of young manhood. The old singer warns Ryno of the uncertainty of life and the inevitableness of death. He then eulogizes the departed hero and pictures his lonely grave - "die enge Wohnung". Throughout his farewell there breathes a note of despair, of the hopelessness of grief. Let us turn from this picture to Schiller's expression of his sorrow at the death of his friend, the youth Weckerlin. The imagery is in many places very similar, but the spirit of the latter is one of hope rather than despair. A comparison of parallel passages will give a better conception of the relation of the two. Alpin addresses these words to the youth Ryno: "Schlank bist du auf dem Hügel, schön unter den Söhnen der Heide. Aber du wirst fallen wie Morar, und auf deinem Grabe wird der Trauernde sitzen." A similar thought is found in the "Elegie":

"Prahlt der Held noch, der auf aufgewälzten Tatenbergen
In des Nachruhms Sonnentempel fleugt?
Wer dort oben hofft noch und hienieden
Auszudauern - wenn der Jüngling stirbt?"

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1. Viehoff, "Schiller's Gedichte", erste Periode, p. 36.

The use in Schiller's poem of terms descriptive of the grave, such as "enges Haus" and "schmale Zelle", and the repetition of "Hügel" are significant because these expressions occur frequently in the "Songs of Selma". For example, compare the following descriptions of the grave, the first taken from the Ossianic Songs and the second from Schiller's"Elegie".

"Eng ist nun deine Wohnung! finster deine Stätte! .... Keine Mutter hast du, dich zu beweinen, kein Mädchen mit Tränen der Liebe .... Tief ist der Schlaf der Toten".

Schiller's description seems to echo these words of Ossian:

"Stumm und taub ist's in dem engen Hause,
Tief der Schlummer der Begrabenen; ....
Oft erwärmt die Sonne deinen Hügel,
Ihre Glut empfindest du nicht mehr; ...
Liebe wird dein Auge nie vergolden,
Nie umhalsen deine Braut wirst du."

The spirit of Schiller's poem differs very noticeably from that of the Ossianic elegy. This difference is especially striking at the close of the lament. Alpin utters a cry of doubt and questioning. "O wann wird es Morgen im Grabe, zu bieten dem Schlummerer: Erwache!" How different is Schiller's farewell to his friend - how hopeful the tone expressing his triumphant faith.

"Fahr dann wohl, du Trauter unserer Seele, ...
Schlummre ruhig bis auf Wiedersehn!....
Erde mag zurück in Erde stäuben,
Fliegt der Geist doch aus dem morschen Haus!

Seine Asche mag der Sturmwind treiben,
Seine Liebe dauert ewig aus!"

Schiller's "Elegie" offers us a splendid example of his remarkable ability even in his early work to use the image of another simply as a medium through which to express his own thought. He could not be a mere copyist. In the "Elegy" the image so obviously taken from Ossian is so filled with Schiller's interpretation, so ennobled and beautified that he wins the inalienable right to call it his own.

In "Eine Leichenphantasie" we find a picture which resembles one in this lament of Alpin's - the picture of Armin, the lonely, grief-stricken father of Morar.[1] "Wer auf seinem Stabe ist das? Wer ist's dessen Haupt weisz ist vor Alter, dessen Augen rot sind von Tränen? Es ist dein Vater, O Morar! der Vater keines Sohns auszer dir ... Laut ward die Trauer der Helden, am lautsten Armins berstender Seufzer." Schiller thus describes the grieving father:

"Zitternd an der Krücke,
Wer mit düstem, rückgesunknem Blicke,
Ausgegossen in ein heulend Ach,
Schwer geneckt vom eisernen Geschicke,
Schwankt dem stummgetragnen Sarge nach? ...
Flosz es "Vater" von des Jünglings Lippe?
Nasse Schauer schauern fürchterlich
Durch sein gramgeschmolzenes Gerippe,
Seine Silberhaare bäumen sich. - "

1. Schiller's Lyrische Gedichte erläutert von H. Düntzer.

Note the points of similarity in the two descriptions. In each instance our attention is effectively drawn to the old father leaning on his cane by the question "Wer ist das?" Schiller's forcible expression of the father's grief "ausgegossen in ein heulend Ach" reminds us of "Armins berstender Seufzer". Each of the white-haired old men feels keenly the tragedy of having his fondest hopes for his son blasted by this early death; for the future seemed to promise so much to these youths. It is interesting to note that expressions practically identical are also used in describing the youths: Morar was swift "wie ein Reh auf dem Hügel", and of his young friend Schiller says:

"Mutig sprang er im Gewühle der Menschen,
Wie auf Gebirgen ein jugendlich Reh."

The elegiac tone, so characteristic of the Ossianic songs, which pervades the "Leichenphantasie" is also very marked in "Der Flüchtling", one of Schiller's early poems.[1] The mood of this latter poem is akin to the mood which finds expression in the first part of Berrathon, a translation of which is to be found in Goethe's Werther.

"Warum weckst du mich, Frühlingsluft? Du buhlst und sprichst: Ich betaue mit Tropfen des Himmels! Aber die Zeit meiner Welkens ist nah, nah der Sturm, der meine Blätter herabstört! Morgen wird der Wandrer kommen, kommen der mich sah in meinen Schönheit, ringsum wird sein Aug' im Felde mich suchen, und wird mich nicht finden. - " This motive is expanded in "Der Flüchtling" and gives rise to the striking contrast between the wondrous beauty,

1. Boxberger, "Schiller's Werke", Erster Teil, Erster Buch, p.253.

joy, and life of the spring morning and the dull despair of man as he prophecies approaching death. Just as the flower awakened by the breath of spring complains that the time of its fading is near, so in the midst of the ecstasy of a spring morning comes the thought of the grave:

"Die lachende Erde
Mit Jünglingsgebärde -
Für mich nur ein Grab!"

Here too, the morrow will no longer greet the living but the dead.

"Morgen, - ach! du rötest
Eine Totenflur,
Ach! und du, O Abendrot, umflötest
Meinen langen Schlummer nur."

The similarity between "Hektor's Abschied" and two songs of Karrik-Thura has been pointed out by Wilhelm Fielitz who suggests the influence of the Ossianic songs upon Schiller's poems.[1] The incident upon which the poem is based is taken from the sixth book of Homer's Iliad; the details, however, of the poem differ materially from Homer's portrayal. The parting scene as Schiller represents it takes place at the home of Hektor rather than at the Scaean Gate. He also chooses a far more dramatic moment for the farewell, introducing it after Patroclus has been killed and Achilles has entered the struggle eager to revenge the death of his friend. Hektor, as well as his wife, realizes that he goes out to certain death. The poem is written in a modern tone which as Minor suggests "mehr an die Abschiedsscenen Ossianischer Helden,

1. Archiv für Litteratur Geschichte, Vol.8, pp.534-543.

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1. Archiv für Litteratur Geschichte, Vol.8, pp.534-543.

in the Greek model is foreshadowed in the Ossian songs, for Connal bids Crimora bring him "Ruiwald von Erz-Gewolbten", the trusty shield of her father. The following lines from Schiller's poem suggest a further influence of the Ossianic songs:

"Nimmer lausch' ich deiner Waffen Schalle,
Müszig liegt dein Eisen in der Halle,
Priams groszer Heldenstamm verdirbt,
Du wirst hingehn, wo kein Tag mehr scheinet. ---"

Fielitz calls attention to the use in this stanza of the negative motive which is such a distinctive feature in the first two stanzas of Vinvela's farewell. At the close of Schilrik's farewell he gives expression to this thought:

"Deines Lieben, O Vinvela, denke
Wenn ich sterbend sinke!"[1]

Vinvela's answer is:

"Ja! - mein Schilrik, deiner will ich denken ...
Ach! mein Schilrik wird im Schlachtfeld sinken,
Aber meines Lieben will ich denken."[2]

Though much inferior in expression and content, this idea anticipates somewhat the thought which is the heart of Schiller's poem, the immortality of love as expressed in Hektor's last message to his wife:

"All mein Sehnen will ich, all mein Denken
In des Lethe stillen Strom versinken,
Aber meine Liebe nicht - - -

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1. Archiv für Litteratur Geschichte, Vol. VIII, p. 540.
2. Ibid., p. 541.

Hektors Liebe stirbt im Lethe nicht."

The last poem in which we note traces of the Songs of Ossian is "Die Künstler" (1781).

"Da zeigte sich mit umgestürztem Lichte,
An Kastor angelehnt, ein blühend Polluxbild,
Der Schatten in des Mondes Angesichte,
Eh' sich der schöne Silberkreis erfüllt".[1]

In speaking of this passage Schiller acknowledges his debt to Ossian for the figure. "Ich habe in dieser Stelle ein Gleichnis Ossians in Gedanken gehabt und zu veredeln gesucht. Ossian sagt von einem, der dem Tode nahe war: Der Tod stand hinter ihm, wie die schwarze Hälfte des Mondes hinter seinem silbernen Horne". In further explanation, "Das menschliche Leben," he says, "erscheint dem Menschen als ein Bogen, das heiszt als ein unvollkommener Teil eines Kreises, den er durch die Nacht des Grabes fortsetzt, um den Zirkel ganz zu machen. Nun ist aber der wachsende Mond ein solches Bogen; und der übrige Teil, der noch fehlt, um den Zirkel völlig zu machen, ist unbeleuchtet".[2]

Schiller has accomplished his purpose: he has refined and exalted the image of Ossian, making of it a beautiful symbol of the perfection to be attained in the Beyond. A baser substance is once more transmuted by his Midas-touch into purest gold.

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1. Die Künstler, lines 250-254.
2. Jonas, "Schillers Briefe", Vol. II, p. 267.

CHAPTER II

ENGLISH SOURCES IN SCHILLER'S LATER POETRY

With the maturing and development of Schiller's genius it becomes correspondingly difficult to note any traces of English influence in his poetry. The Ossian-enthusiasm was by no means permanent and shows itself only in his early work. There are but few of his later poems in which a distinct resemblance to English models can be traced.

It is not unreasonable, however, to assume that Schiller was influenced in writing "Des Mädchens Klage" (1798) by Old English Folk-Songs with which he became familiar while in the Military Academy. The tone of this poem is distinctively that of the English Folk-Song; the situation, as Boxberger suggests, recalls the "Willow-Song" in Othello and "Das Mädchen am Ufer" from Herder's Stimmen der Völker:[1]

"Die See war wild im Heulen,
Der Sturm, er stöhnt mit Müh,
Da sasz das Mädchen weinend
Am harten Fels sasz sie;
Weit über Meeres Brüllen
Warf Seufzer sie und Blick,
Nicht konnt's ihr Seufzer stillen,
Der matt ihr kam zurück."

The background of Schiller's poem, which is also a maiden's lament for her lover, is very similar to the English song: here, too, the

1. Viehoff "Schillers Gedichte", Vol.III, p. 90.

scene, lonely and melancholy, seems a part of the mood of the disconsolate maid:

"Der Eichwald brauset, die Wolken ziehn,
Das Mägdlein sitzet an Ufers Grün,
Es bricht sich die Welle mit Macht, mit Macht,
Und sie seufzt hinaus in die finstre Nacht,
Das Auge von Weinen getrübet."

The rhythm of Schiller's poem recalls "Das trauernde Mädchen", a song which also appeared in Herder's collection of folk songs:

"im säuselnden Winde, am murmelnden Bach
Sasz Lila auf Blumen und weinet' und sprach:
Was blüht ihr, ihr Blumen? was säuselst du, West?
Was murmelst du, Strom, der mich murmelnd verläszt?"

In "Das Spiel des Lebens" where Schiller's treatment of his subject, though comprehensive, is in a lighter vein than is his wont, he makes use of a figure which invites an interesting comparison with Shakespeare's and Pope's use of the same figure. He bids us look into his "Guckkastenbild" if we would see the play of life, warning us however not to look too closely:

"Schaut her! Nie wird die Bühne leer:
Dort bringen sie das Kind getragen,
Der Knabe hüpft, der Jüngling stürmt einher,
Es kämpft der Mann, und alles will er wagen."

Schiller's four ages of man as they thus appear upon the stage of life call to mind Shakespeare's famous "Seven Ages of Man":[1]

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1. Shakespeare's "As You Like It", Act II, Scene VII.

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players,
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages."

Shakespeare then causes to appear before us the infant on his nurse's arm, the school-boy as he loiters on his way to school, the lover, the soldier, the justice, finally the old man, and last of all "second childishness and mere oblivion". So Shakespeare pictures the course of man's life. Schiller's representation has a more universl content and is perhaps more analogous to Pope's:

"Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;
Some livlier plaything gives his youth delight,
A little louder but as empty quite;
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
And beads and prayer books are the toys of age;
Pleased with the bauble still, as that before;
Till tired he sleeps, and Life's poor play is o'er."[1]

The similarity becomes more striking when we note the corresponding passage in a redaction of the poem.

"Der Leidenschaft ganz hingegeben,
Trabt alle Welt, dort linker Hand,
Nach Ämpter, Titel, Stern und Band,
Nach Geld, nach Putz und anderm Tand".[2]

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1. Pope's"Essay on Man".
2. Boxberger, "Schillers Gedichte", Drittes Buch, p. 201.

Schiller abandons here the figure of the stage but he depicts the vanity of human aims in terms which bear a remarkable resemblance to the "baubles" of the English poet.

An interest in Jonathan Carver's "Travels through North America" with its descriptions of the life and customs of the various Indian tribes was the occasion for Schiller's observation to Goethe, "mir ist, als wenn sich diese Völkernatur in einem Lied artig darstellen liesze."[1] His very successful treatment of this material in the "Nadowessiers Totenlied" proves that he was not mistaken. His subject, a very happy choice, is based upon the custom of the Nadowessier tribe of addressing a farewell speech to a deceased comrade.

It was customary among the Nadowessiers, so Carver tells us, upon the death of a warrior to clothe him as he appeared while alive, place him in an upright posture surrounded by his weapons, and address him with these words, "Du sitzest noch unter uns, Bruder, dein Körper hat noch seine gewöhnliche Gestalt, und ist dem unsrigen noch ähnlich, ohne sichtbare Abnahme, nur dasz ihm das Vermögen zu handeln fehlt. Aber wohin ist der Athem geflohen, der noch vor etlichen Stunden Rauch zum groszen Geiste empor blies? Warum schweigen jetzt diese Lippen, von denen wir erst kurzens so nachdrückliche und gefällige Reden hörten? Warum sind diese Füsze ohne Bewegung, die noch vor einigen Tagen schneller waren, als das Reh auf jenen Gebürgen? Warum hängen diese Arme ohnmächtig, die die höchsten Bäume hinaufklettern, und den härtesten Bogen spannen konnten? ... Wir sind zwar zurückgeblieben um deinen Ruhm zu erhalten; aber auch

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1. Jonas, "Schillers Briefe", Vol. V, p. 212.

wir werden dir eines Tages folgen. .... Wir wollen deinen Körper sorgfältig zu den Körpern deiner Vorgänger legen, in den Hoffnung dasz dein Geist mit ihren Geistern speisen und bereit sein werde, den unsrigen zu empfangen, wenn auch wir in dem groszen Lande der Seelen ankommen."[1]

In Schiller's reproduction of the scene he shows us first the warrior as he has been placed upon the mat:

"Seht, da sitzt er auf der Matte,
Aufrecht sitzt er da,
Mit dem Anstand, den er hatte
Als er's Licht noch sah".

Here he differs slightly from his source; before emphasizing the absence of life-giving breath, he asks: "Doch wo ist die Kraft der Fäuste?" thus forcing upon our attention the realization of the former strength of the deceased. The third stanza continues the thought.

"Wo die Augen, falkenhelle,
Die des Renntiers Spur
Zählten auf des Grases Welle,
Auf dem Tau der Flur?"

This is Schiller's invention, though Carver praises the ability of the Indian to follow the trail of man or beast.[2] This emphasis upon one of the characteristic abilities of the Indian is much more effective than the reference in the original to the inability to speak. In the next two stanzas Schiller follows the original

1. Carver's "Reisen durch Nord-Amerika", p. 334.
2. Johann Carver's "Reisen durch die innern Gegenden von Nord-Amerika", p. 209.

in contrasting the former agility and strength of the warrior with the lifeless body before them. Stanzas six to nine are a picture of the after-life of the Indian in a land

"Wo kein Schnee mehr ist,
Wo mit Mais die Felder prangen,
Der von selber sprieszt.
Wo mit Vögeln alle Strauche
Wo der Wald mit Wild,
Wo mit Fischen alle Teiche
Lustig sind gefüllt."

Compare this with Carver's account of their belief. In discussing their religion Carver observes, "Sie zweifeln keineswegs an einem künftigen Leben, aber sie glauben, dasz sie ähnliche Beschäftigungen, doch mit weit weniger Mühe und Arbeit, haben, und in eine reizende Gegend kommen werden, wo ein stets heitrer unumwölkter Himmel, und ein immerwährender Frühling herrscht; wo die Wälder mit Wild, die Seen mit Fischen angefüllt sind, die sich ohne alle Mühe fangen lassen, und dasz sie überhaupt in dem grösszten überflüsse und Vergnügen leben werden." The concluding stanzas are a free but skilful adaptation of the Indian belief that the future life is but a continuation of this life;

"Bringet her die letzten Gaben,
Stimmt die Totenklag'!
Alles sei mit ihm begraben
Was ihn freuen mag."

The deceased man is provided with all things necessary for his journey and his future life. Schiller includes in these necessi-

ties "die Beile, des Bären fette Keule, das Messer" and last of all:

"Farben auch, den Leib zu malen,
Steckt ihm in die Hand,
Dasz er rötlich möge strahlen
In der Seelen Land."

Although Schiller follows his source very closely he displays his skill in the selection of characteristic details; the elemental tone of the poem is in harmony with the character of the people of whom he writes. His choice of meter is very effective; "die kräftig einsetzenden kurzen trochäischen Verse entsprechen sehr gut der männlich derben Sinnesart, die sich in diesem Klageliede kund giebt."[1] Goethe, to whom Schiller sent the poem, characterizes it thus; "Das Totenlied, das hier zurückkommt hat seinen echten -realistisch - humoristischen Charakter, der wilden Naturen in solchen Fällen so wohl ansteht. Es ist ein groszes Verdienst der Poesie, uns auch in diese Stimmungen zu versetzen, so wie es verdienstlich ist, den Kreis der poetischen Gegenstände immer zu erweitern."[2]

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1. Viehoff, "Schillers Gedichte", Vol. III, p. 75.
2. Goethe's Letter to Schiller, July 5, 1797.

CHAPTER III

TRACES OF BUNYAN'S PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN SCHILLER'S POETRY

An English author to whose influence we owe one of Schiller's finest poems is John Bunyan. The English tinker's vital representation of the trials and temptations of the pious wanderer and of his ultimate success in reaching the heavenly city is the prototype of Schiller's "Pilgrim" who also longs and earnestly strives for that which is eternal and infinite. The relation of "Pilgrim's Progress to two of Schiller's poems - "Der Pilgrim" and "Sehnsucht" - was first traced by Gustav Kettner in an article which appeared in the "Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie", (1885). Although Kettner limits the comparison to these two poems there are also indications in Schiller's earlier poems of Bunyan's influence.

"Pilgrim's Progress" was translated very early into foreign languages; in the eighteenth century it had spread throughout the pietistic circles of Germany and had forced its way among the common people. Jung-Stilling tells in the conclusion to "Heimweh" how as an eight-year-old boy (1748) he had read the Bedford tinker's allegory "mit unaussprechlichen Vergnügen".[1] It is, therefore, not improbable that this book fell into the hands of the youthful Schiller. Kettner suggests that he might have read it while at Ludwigsburg; on the contrary, Düntzer asserts that Schiller's father as well as his instructors were strictly orthodox and would not permit pietistic writings.[2] There is, however, very conclusive evidence in his poetry of an early knowledge of the "Pilgrim's Progress".

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1. Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, Vol. XVII, p. 110.
2. Düntzer's "Schillers Gedichte", Vol. I, No. 39.

The earliest of Schiller's poems which suggests the influence of the English Puritan is the "Elegie auf dem Tod eines Jünglings". The poem is the expression of a vital experience through which the author had just passed. Deep sorrow over the loss of a friend; a tinge of bitterness that a life so full of promise should be broken off in youth; the gloom of the grave; the hope of immortality - all find a place in the thought of the poet. The death of his friend has brought Schiller face to face with the fact of Death and the mystery of the great Beyond. The young poet rejects the theorizing of the philosophers, the paradise as conceived by the mob, the regions created by the poets, yet his faith in immortality remains unshaken.

"Nicht in Welten, wie die Weisen träumen,
Auch nicht in des Pöbels Paradies,
Nicht in Himmeln, wie die Dichter reimen, -
Aber wir ereilen dich gewisz."

The insistent questioning which follows seems to indicate that the thought expressed in the inquiry appeals to the poet although it does not offer him positive assurance;

"Dasz es wahr sei, was den Pilger freute?
Dasz noch jenseits ein Gedanke sei?
Dasz die Tugend übers Grab geleite?
Dasz es mehr denn eitle Phantasei?"

What an added meaning is gained when this passage is interpreted in the light of Bunyan's allegory. Can it be that the joys which greeted the Pilgrim are true? Does thought extend beyond the grave? The next question suggests that the poet had in mind Chris-

tian's fellowship with Faithful and Hopeful, for he asks if virtue accompanies us beyond the grave. And in conclusion he questions, "Is this after all not more than simply idle fancy?" That this image of the Pilgrim should occur to Schiller at a time when he was pondering over the most profound mysteries is proof of the deep impression which the allegory made upon the youthful poet.

In one of his later poems, "Elysium", which pictures those regions prepared for the blest, Schiller's description is suggestive both of the Elysian fields of Grecian mythology,[1] and of the heavenly land as Bunyan describes it. The picture of the rapture, the eternal joy, the absence of sorrow or pain, as well as the descriptions of the region itself with its meadows, brooks, and eternal springtime call to mind most vividly Bunyan's picture of the many delights which greet the Pilgrim as he nears the Celestial City. Note, for example, his picture of the Land of Beulah; "Now I saw in my dream, that by this time the pilgrims were got over the Enchanted Ground and entering into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth. In this country the sun shineth night and day - - in this land the Shining Ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven. In this land also, the contract between the bride and the bridegroom was renewed."[2] Compare with this the following selection from Schiller's poem:

"Vorüber die stöhnende Klage!
Elysiums Freudengelage

1. Viehoff, "Schillers Gedichte", Vol. I, p. 158.
2. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", p. 184.

Ersäufen jegliches Ach -
Elysiums Leben
Ewige Wonne, ewiges Schweben,
Durch lachende Fluren ein flötender Bach."

"Jugendlich milde
Beschwebt die Gefilde
Ewiger Mai;
Die Stunden entfliehen in goldenen Träumen,
Die Seele schwillt aus in unendlichen Räumen,
Wahrheit reiszt hier den Schleier entzwei. -- "

"Hier umarmen sich getreue Gatten,
Küssen sich auf grunen samtnen Matten,
Liebgekost vom Balsam west" ---

Schiller's "durch lachende Fluren ein flötender Bach" calls to mind Bunyan's description of By-Path Meadow "curiously beautified with lilies" and crossed by a "pleasant" river.[1] Also the thought expressed at the close of the second stanza that the soul mounts into endless space recalls Bunyan's account of the sould rising lightly through the air to the Celestial City. Note also that in each representation occurs the happy meeting of husband and wife. It is, moreover, very significant that in addition to these similarities Schiller should introduce the figure of the weary Pilgrim:

"Hier strecket der wallende Pilger die matten
Brennenden Glieder im säuselnden Schatten,

1. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", p. 131.

Leget die Bürde auf ewig dahin."

Christian, too, lies down to rest in the pleasant arbors of the King; and he has lost forever the burden which oppressed him. These similarities, which seem to be too striking and clear-cut to be merely accidental, are of utmost importance as indications of Schiller's early acquaintance with Bunyan's work.

In view of Schiller's later conception of the Pilgrim, his use of the figure in "Die Grösse der Welt" is of peculiar importance. It would, however, be vain to attempt to trace a resemblance to Bunyan's Pilgrim; he appears as a lonely wanderer seeking an impossible goal. Into the expression of his intense longing to fathom the unfathomable and to penetrate the impenetrable, Schiller introduces the figure of the Pilgrim symbolic of his own sublime and unattainable ideal. Judging from his earlier use of the figure, the Pilgrim was to the youthful Schiller, as to Bunyan, one striving through life toward a heavenly goal - an ideal existence to be attained after death. For the mature Schiller the figure of the Pilgrim takes on a new meaning; he no longer places the goal toward which the wanderer is striving beyond but rather within Life.

The feeling of depression which comes to one shut in by a deep, narrow valley and the sight of sun-lit hills beyond, which awakens the desire to flee from the oppression of the valley call forth in "Sehnsucht" the expression of a keen longing to escape from the world of reality to a world of eternal beauty and happiness. The picture of this lovely landscape grows under the brush of the artist; it makes its appeal through every sense.

"Harmonien hör' ich klingen
Töne süszer Himmelsruh,

Und die leichten Winde bringen
Mir die Düfte Balsam zu,
Goldne Früchte seh' ich glühen,
Winkend zwischen dunkelm Laub,
Und die Blumen, die dort blühen,
Werden keines Winters Raub.

Ach, wie schön musz sich's ergehen
Dort im ew'gen Sonnenschein,
Und die Luft auf jenen Höhen,
O wie labend musz sie sein!
Doch mir wehrt des Stromes Toben,
Der ergrimmt dazwischen braust,
Seine Wellen sind gehoben,
Sas die Seele mir ergraust."

A boat rocks idly on the waves but is without a pilot; the other shore can be reached only through faith:

"Du muszt glauben, du muszt wagen,
Denn die Götter leihn kein Pfand,
Nur ein Wunder kann dich tragen
In das schöne Wunderland."

"Schwerlich", observes Kettner, "wird Schiller durch die Betrachtung der wirklichen Landschaft allein zu seinem Phantasiebilde angeregt sein, andere von aussenher überkommene Vorstellungen muszten mitwirken, um seinen Empfindungen eine so eigentümliche Gestaltung zu verleihen."[1] The poem as Kettner points out bears

1. Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, Vol. XVII, p. 112.

distinct traces of the influence of Bunyan's description of the Beulah Land. The Pilgrims after passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death come to this land with its "pleasant air", constant singing of birds, fragrant flowers and eternal sunshine. The similarity is made more striking by the introduction of the stream which can be crossed only through a miracle of faith; for when about to cross the River of Death these words are spoken to the Pilgrims, "You shall find it deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place."[1]

In "Sehnsucht" Schiller has chosen a single situation from Bunyan's allegory as a background for his poem; in "Der Pilgrim" he makes use of the entire content of the allegory. Bunyan's influence upon this poem is unmistakable. Schiller's Pilgrim, like Christian, leaves family and home to undertake a pilgrimage dictated by an intense hope and an obscure belief. He, too, crosses mountains, streams, and abysses, always striving untiringly toward the goal. At last, he comes to the shore of a stream "der mach Morgen flosz" and with resolute faith casts himself into the water. Here, the resemblance to the English allegory ceases. Christian, though the waves close over his head in a moment of doubt, succeeds in reaching the gleaming gates; the other Pilgrim is carried out to the boundless sea.

"Hin zu einem groszen Meere
Trieb mich seiner Wellen Spiel,
Vor mir liegt's in weiter Leere,
Näher bin ich nicht dem Ziel."

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1. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", p. 187.

"Ach dein Steg will dahin führen,
Ach der Himmel über mir
Will die Erde nie berühren,
Und das Dort ist niemals hier!"

Schiller once more asserts his wonderful power to touch his material with a master-hand and to make it a part of the beautiful fabric he is weaving. He has shifted the goal toward which his pilgrim is striving and failure must result for the goal is an impossible one. It is no longer merely a blissful existence beyong the grave which the Pilgrim endeavors to attain; rather, he is seeking to find in the reality of life the divine imperishableness. "Nicht in der wirklichen Welt, nur im Herzen, nur in der Seele wohnt das Schöne. Vergeblich zieht der Pilgrim fort, um das himmlisch Unvergängliche irgendwo auf Erden zu finden. Der Weg zum Ideal führt aus dem Leben heraus. Die Schönheit ist der Himmel; die Schönheit ist der Friede; die Schönheit ist das Glück."[1]

The realization that the ideal and the actual are irreconcilable finds its most perfect expression in "Das Ideal und das Leben". One can never realize the ideal in reality but must flee from the sordid struggles of life, from the limitations which hamper, from the laws which bind, into the realm of the ideal, into the land of beauty, truth and freedom. In his portrayal of this realm of the ideal Schiller seems again to have in mind the image of Bunyan's Paradise, though the picture is but faintly suggestive and not drawn in bold outline as in "Sehnsucht".

"Die Gespielin seliger Naturen
Wandelt oben in des Lichtes Fluren....."

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1. Scherer, "Geschichte der deutschen Literatur", p. 588.

"Durch der Schönheit stille Schattenlaube ...."

"Dann erblicket von der Schönheit Hügel
Freudig das erflogne Ziel."

This picture of the "Schönheit Hügel", symbolic of the ideal, appears also in "Sehnsucht":

"Dort erblick' ich schöne Hügel ...
Ach wie schön musz sich's ergehen
Dort im ew'gen Sonnenschein,
Und die Luft auf jenen Höhen
O wie labend musz sie sein!"

In "Triumph der Liebe" occurs again the "Sonnenhügel", in "Das Geheimnis der Reminiszenz", "die Wahrheit lichtem Sonnenhügel". The same picture is found in "An der Freude":

"Zu der Tugend steilem Hügel
Leitet sie des Dulders Bahn.
Auf des Glaubens Sonnenberge
Sieht man ihre Fahnen wehn."

The expression in "Die Künstler" is merely "Hügel" while in "Klage des Ceres" it is again "besonnten Hügel". This repetition of a rather unusual portrayal of the ideal gives rise to the inquiry - why does Schiller make use of this figure to symbolize the ideal? The fact that this symbol occurs in "Das Ideal und das Leben" and also in "Sehnsucht" is most significant, for it justifies the assumption that Schiller had in mind Bunyan's image of the gleaming heights of the Celestial City. Only as it is interpreted in this light does this figure, which occurs in many of the poems, have meaning.

That Schiller uses the Pilgrim's Progress as the model for his own Pilgrim has been conceded.[1] That his earlier poems show unmistakable indications of the same influence and that a single image from this allegory, deeply rooted in his thought, finds frequent expression in his poems are conclusive evidences that as a youth Schiller knew the English allegorist and yielded to the power of this masterpiece.

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1. Düntzer's "Schillers Gedichte", Vol. I, No. 39.

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